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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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---------- 101533
P R 210757Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6194
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN
EUCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 7552

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TU
SUBJECT: FACTORS RELATED TO DEVELOPING TURKISH
POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: ANKARA 7518 AND ANKARA 7493

1. SOMETIMES LONG AND ALWAYS COMPLEX TURKISH PROCESS OF FORMING NEW GOVT, AND PROBABLY GOING FROM THERE INTO NEW ELECTIONS, HAS BEGUN.

2. PUBLIC REACTION TO ECEVIT'S SUDDEN DECISION TO BREAK UP THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY'S (RPP) FRAGILE COALITION WITH THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) HAS BEEN DIVIDED. THERE IS, ON THE ONE HAND, CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY FOR ECEVIT'S FRUSTRATION AND CONCERN OVER THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NSP AND ITS LEADER, DEPUTY PRIMIN ERBAKAN. HOWEVER, IT IS ALSO BEING SAID IN SOME
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QUARTERS THAT ECEVIT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, HAS BLOWN HIS COOL.

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SOME CRITICS ARE SAYING THAT IN THE FACE OF PERSONAL FRUSTRATION, HE HAS TAKEN PRECIPITIOUS ACTION AT A TIME WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION REQUIRED THAT A GOVERNMENT CRISIS BE AVOIDED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE -- AND AT A TIME WHEN ERBAKAN'S PERFORMANCE, WHILE DISTURBING, HAD NOT REACHED THE POINT OF BEING UNBEARABLE. ONE, OF COURSE, ALSO HEARS TALK, PARTICULARLY FROM ECEVIT'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS, THAT HE IS BLATANTLY SEEKING TO CAPITALIZE ON THE CYPRUS SITUATION, AND THAT IN BREAKING UP THE COALITION AT THIS TIME, HE IS PLACING PERSONAL AND PARTY INTERESTS AHEAD OF THE NATION'S.

3. IN OUR VIEW, PRIMIN ECEVIT ACTED AT THIS TIME TO BREAK UP HIS STRANGE COALITION FOR TWO REASONS. THE FIRST WAS A GENUINE CONCERN (AND FRUSTRATION) OVER THE ERRATIC PERFORMANCE OF HIS RIGHT WING COALITION PARTNER, THE NSP. THE SECOND WAS TO EXPLOIT (AS HE IS BEING ACCUSED) HIS CURRENT POPULARITY OVER THE CYPRUS SITUATION AND THUS EXPAND, THROUGH AN EARLY ELECTION, WHAT IS AT THE MOMENT A MOST FRAGILE PARLIAMENTARY BASE. FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD THE NATIONAL EUPHORIA ARISING FROM THE CURRENT SITUATION ON CYPRUS MUST WEAR THIN AND THE PRIMIN IS UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE OF THIS. IN ADDITION, AS THE MONTHS PASS, BOTH THE SERIOUS INFLATIONARY AND UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS HERE ARE LIKELY TO WORK TO HIS DETRIMENT.

5. AS A RESULT, WE BELIEVE ECEVIT IS SEEKING TO FORM A NEW COALITION WITH HIS RPP (CURRENTLY 185 SEATS IN A 450 MEMBER PARLIAMENTARY BODY) AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP) AND TO MOVE AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE FROM THAT TO AN ELECTION IN LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER. WE MUST NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT A COALITION OF ECEVIT'S PARTY AND THE DP (44 SEATS) WOULD RESULT IN A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY OF ONLY FOUR VOTES. SUCH A COALITION CAN GOVERN TURKEY, BUT IT WOULD BE A SHAKY ARRANGEMENT. A MAJOR PROBLEM, OF COURSE, WILL BE PARTY DISCIPLINE, WHICH IS ALWAYS AN UNCERTAIN FACTOR IN TURKISH POLITICS. IN THAT CONNECTION, AN IMPORTANT FIRST QUESTION RE PARTY SOLIDARITY WILL BE WHETHER DP LEADER FERRUH BOZBEYLI CAN DELIVER HIS TOTAL VOTE FOR THIS NEW COALITION. (IF HE CAN, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A FEW INDEPENDENTS, PRESENTLY SIX IN TOTAL, COULD JOIN AND STRENGTHEN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE COALITION'S RAZOR-THIN MAJORITY.)

6. IN PUTTING TOGETHER A NEW RPP-DP COALITION, THE RANK AND FILE OF BOTH PARTIES ARE BEING ASKED BY THEIR LEADERS TO PASS ON TWO ISSUES. THE FIRST IS WHETHER THEY ARE WILLING TO ENTER SUCH A COALITION, AND THE SECOND IS WHETHER THEY WILL AGREE TO EARLY ELECTIONS. ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE, OF COURSE, RELUCTANT TO HAVE ELECTIONS CALLED SO SOON AFTER

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THE PAST ONES; BUT IN THIS CASE, THE LEADERS OF THESE TWO PARTIES CAN AGREE THAT BOTH NOW STAND TO GAIN CONSIDERABLE SEATS. (THE DP WITH ITS 44 SEATS IS A SPLIT-OFF FROM THE JUSTICE PARTY, THE LATTER BEING TURKEY'S MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY. THE JUSTICE PARTY NOW HAS 148 SEATS IN THE PARLIAMENT AND IS LEAD BY FORMER PRIMIN SULEYMAN DEMIREL. IT IS GENERALLY THOUGHT THAT THE NEXT ELECTION WILL SEE THE DP GAIN STRENGTH WHILE DEMIREL AND THE JUSTICE PARTY WILL SUFFER FURTHER LOSSES.) THE BASIC GUESSING HERE IS THAT ECEVIT WILL HAVE ONLY SLIGHT DIFFICULTY IN GETTING HIS ENTIRE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO AGREE TO A LATE FALL ELECTION BUT THAT BOZBEYLI WILL HAVE HARDER GOING AND MAY END UP INSISTING THAT THE ELECTIONS NOT COME UNTIL THE LATE SPRING. BOZBEYLI IS EXPECTED TO HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY WITH HIS MEMBERSHIP ON THE TIMING OF THE ELECTION THAN HE IS IN GETTING THEM TO AGREE TO ENTER INTO A COALITION WITH THE RPP. IN ANY EVENT, IF THE TWO LEADERS MANAGE TO ESTABLISH A COALITION, IT WILL BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT IT IS FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF LEADING THE COUNTRY DURING A PRE-ELECTION PERIOD OF RELATIVELY SHORT DURATION. ONE IMPORTANT REASON FOR THIS IS THAT THE TWO PARTIES HAVE VERY DIFFERENT ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHIES, AND THEY WILL BE GOVERNING IN A PERIOD OF CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY.

7. THE PRESENT BETTING IS THAT AN RPP-DP COALITION WILL, IN FACT, BE WORKED OUT AND THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE AGREED ON FOR EITHER LATE FALL OR LATE SPRING - OR AT THE VERY LATEST, A YEAR FROM NOW. VARIANCES ON THIS ARE POSSIBLE WE COULD END UP WITH THE RPP AND DP REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE CALLING OF ELECTIONS BUT ALSO END UP WITH THEIR NOT GOING INTO A COALITION TOGETHER. IN THIS CASE, IF THE ELECTION WAS SOON, THE PRESENT CARETAKER GOVERNMENT
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COULD POSSIBLY STAY IN OFFICE UNTIL THE ELECTION. MORE LIKELY, SOME DEAL WOULD BE WORKED OUT WHICH WOULD PERMIT ECEVIT AND HIS PARTY TO STAY IN OFFICE AS A ONE-PARTY MINORITY GOVERNMENT.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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P R 210757Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6195
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ANKARA 7552

8. THE MAJOR OPPOSITION JUSTICE PARTY IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO AN ELECTION IN THE NOVEMBER-DECEMBER PERIOD, BUT LESS SO FOR NEXT SPRING. BEFORE TURKEY'S ACTION ON CYPRUS, DEMIREL HAD ALLEGEDLY WANTED AN ELECTION NEXT SPRING BECAUSE HE FELT BY THEN ECEVIT WOULD BE THOROUGHLY BOGGED DOWN BY SOME OF TURKEY'S MORE INTRACTABLE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE BOOST THAT ECEVIT HAS GOTTEN FROM CYPRUS OBVIOUSLY THROWS THESE TIMING CALCULATIONS OFF SOMEWHAT, AND DEMIREL IS PROBABLY UNSURE AT THIS POINT AS TO WHETHER HE NOW WANTS ELECTIONS NEXT SPRING OR NOT. WHAT IS ABSOLUTELY SURE, HOWEVER, IS THAT HE IS ADAMANETLY OPPOSED TO ELECTIONS THIS NOVEMBER-DECEMBER. HE IS ALSO OPPOSED TO PERMITTING AN ECEVIT RPP ONE PARTY MINORITY GOVERNMENT, BUT HE MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE THE CONTROLLING SAY ON THIS.
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9. IF ECEVIT EFFORTS TO FORM A NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT OR INTERIM MINORITY GOVERNMENT FLOUNDER, AS IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE GIVEN THE COMPLEXITIES OF TURKEY'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE), WE MAY THEN SEE AN EFFORT TO FORM A GOVERNMENT "OF THE RIGHT." THIS

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GROUPING WOULD GROW OUT OF SOME COMBINATION OF THE JP, THE
DP, THE NSP, AND THE VERY SMALL REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY
(WHICH IS A CONSERVATIVE SPLIT-OFF FROM
ECEVIT'S RPP). THESE PARTIES HAVE AMONG THEM 240 -250
SEATS IN THE PARLIAMENT. ANY SUCH COMBINATION WOULD, HOWEVER,
BE DIFFICULT TO PUT TOGETHER. THE REASON IS THAT THE JUSTICE
PARTY'S BLOCK OF VOTES WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO IT, AND THE
BITTERNESS THAT EXISTS BETWEEN DEMIREL PERSONALLY AND THE
MEMBERSHIP OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WOULD MAKE A COOPERATIVE
EFFORT OF THIS KIND UNLIKELY. IT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY REQUIRE
DEMIREL'S STEPPING ASIDE, WHICH MOST OBSERVERS HERE FEEL HE
IS NOT REPEAT NOT PREPARED TO DO.

10. ALL THIS OBVIOUSLY PRESENTS A VERY COMPLEX POLITICAL
SITUATION. IT SEEMS TO US, HOWEVER, THAT ECEVIT IS LIKELY TO
REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL AN ELECTION -- PREFERABLY, FROM HIS
VIEWPOINT, IN LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER, OR, FROM
DP VIEWPOINT, IN JUNE. IN ANY EVENT, DURING NEXT FEW DAYS,
ANSWERS TO SOME OF THESE IMMEDIATE INTERNAL POLITICAL
QUESTIONS SHOULD BE CLEARER.

11. OBVIOUSLY TWO QUESTIONS OF MOST INTEREST TO US ARE
THE EFFECT OF ALL THIS ON POPPIES AND ON
CYPRUS. RE POPPIES - DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT LAST YEAR'S
POLITICAL CAMPAIGN REIGNITED THIS SUBJECT AS A DOMESTIC POLITICAL
ISSUE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT COMING PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY WILL
RESULT IN FURTHER GRANDSTANDING BY POLITICAL PARTIES HERE IN
THEIR SEARCH FOR VOTES IN THE POPPY GROWING AREAS.
CERTAINLY THERE IS NO REPEAT NO CHANCE THAT THERE WILL BE A
REVERSAL OF THE DECISION TO RESUME POPPY CULTIVATION. BUT WE
HAVE REASON TO BE HOPEFUL THAT GOVERNMENT DECISION TO MAKE
EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE STRAW PROCESS WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE
CHANGED DURING THIS COMING PERIOD. THIS, OF COURSE, CANNOT BE
A CERTAINTY, BUT FOR THE PRESENT, AT LEAST, THE
PROSPECTS ARE ENCOURAGING.
(FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS OF OUR REASONS, SEE EMBTEL 7522.)
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12. S TO CYPRUS, THE PRIMIN HAS PRIVATELY STATED THAT, AS
CARETAKER OR PRE-ELECTION PRIMIN, HE WILL BE ABLE TO SPEAK
AND ACT AUTHORITATIVELY, AND, IF HE DEEMS IT NECESSARY, ACT WITH
FLEXIBILITY AS WELL. HE HAS TOLD ME HE WOULD NOT HAVE BROKEN
UP THE COALITION AT THIS TIME IF HE HAD HAD ANY DOUBTS ON THIS SCORE.

13. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, FULLY SUBSCRIBE TO THIS VIEW.
TURKISH OPINION AT THE MOMENT IS VERY MUCH BEHIND WHAT
ECEVIT HAS DONE ON
CYPRUS FOR THE PAST TWO MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN IN NORMAL
TIMES HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL CON-

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SEQUENCES OF FLEXIBILITY IN HIS STANCE. IN OTHER WORDS, WHILE WE ARE PERSUADED THAT HE IS PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE ON THE CYPRUS SITUATION (I.E., OFFER CONCESSIONS AT WHAT HE CONSIDERS THE STRATEGIC MOMENT) THESE CONCESSIONS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE THE SUBJECT OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONTROVERSY HERE. DURING AN ELECTORAL SITUATION, OF COURSE, ALL HIS CONCERNS ON THIS SCORE CANNOT HELP, WE THINK, BUT MOUNT.

14. HIS CONCERNS MAY NOT BE TOO GREAT WITH RESPECT TO CONCESSIONS ALREADY TENTATIVELY AGREED UPON WITHIN HIS PREVIOUS COALITION. BUT ANY-THING BEYOND THAT (AND WE SUSPECT CONCESSIONS BEYOND THAT WILL BE NEEDED), ARE LIKELY TO BE HARD TO COME BY IN AN ELECTION PERIOD. THIS WILL BE ESPECIALLY TRUE RELATIVE TO HIS ACTIONS THIS FALL, IF THE ELECTIONS ARE SET FOR THIS DECEMBER. IT WILL OBVIOUSLY BE LESS TRUE IF THE ELECTIONS ARE POSTPONED UNTIL THE SPRING OR BEYOND.
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